

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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R 041355Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7887

INFO /AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES 434

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

CINCEUR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELTN, ETRD, MZ, ZA, MI

SUBJ: TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS OF CARGO FROM MOZAMBIQUE
TO ZAMBIA DISCUSSED

REF: LM 343

1. SUMMARY: CONTACTS WITH MALAWI RAILWAYS AND PRIVATE BUSINESS
OFFICIALS CONFIRM BACKLOG OF ZAMBIA TRAFFIC REPORTED REFTEL BUT
PROVIDED ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS ARISING FROM GENERAL SHIPPING
HOLDUPS THROUGHOUT EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, PORT CONGESTION,
SHORTAGE OF RAIL ROLLING STOCK AND UNDERDEVELOPED RAIL/HIGHWAY
TRANSPORT LINKS. END SUMMARY.

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2. WORKING AGREEMENT BETWEEN MALAWI RAILWAYS (MR) AND ZAMBIA CALLS FOR TRANSPORT 17,000 TONS OF ZAMBIA CARGO PER MONTH VIA MOZAMBIQUE PORTS. MALAWI RAILWAYS HAVE GENERALLY GOOD RECORD IN DELIVERING THAT AMOUNT MONTHLY UTILIZING RAILHEADS AT BALAKA AND SALIMA. LATTER TWO POINTS ADMITTEDLY USUALLY CLOGGED DUE LACK OF STORAGE AND OFFLOADING FACILITIES, MAINLY FOR BULK CARGOES (POL, FERTILIZERS, SULPHUR). ROAD TRANSPORT TO ZAMBIA FROM THESE POINTS ALSO IS POORLY COORDINATED. MR TRAFFIC OFFICIALS ESTIMATE TOTAL NUMBER OF RAILCARS IN OPERATION DAILY WITHIN MALAWI IS ABOUT 1,500 OF WHICH 500 POSSIBLY ARE FROM MOZAMBIQUE RAILWAYS. OFFICIALS INSIST 100-125 RAILCARS ENTER MALAWI DAILY FROM BEIRA/NACALA AND EQUAL NUMBER BACKHAULS EXPORT GOODS. MR HAS BEEN LOOKING TO PURCHASE MINIMUM 100 NEW RAILCARS SINCE LAST YEAR BUT HAS BEEN UNABLE LOCATE SUPPLIER VIEW WORLDWIDE SHORTAGE. SOURCES STATE ZAMBIA HAS REFUSED MALAWI REQUEST TO RELOCATE SOME OF ITS LOCOMOTIVES AND RAILCARS TO MALWI SYSTEM TO AID IN CLEARING ZAMBIA BACKLOG.

3. TONNAGE INPUTS THROUGH MOZAMBIQUE PORTS ARE DRAWAN UP IN PRINCIPLE BY BEIRA AND NACALA PORT TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEES HAVING MEMBERSHIP FROM MOZAMBIQUE, MALAWI AND ZAMBIA AND, IN CASE OF BEIRA, ALSO RHODESIA AND ZAIRE. NACALA COMMITTEE CURRENTLY CHAIRED BY MALAWIAN, BEIRA COMMITTEE BY PERSEC RHODESIAN MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION. MALAWIAN MEMBER OF NACALA COMMITTEE STATES PROBLEM OF MALAWI THROUGHPUT TO ZAMBIA IS THAT ZAMBIAN COOPERATION HAS BEEN POOR. ZAMBIANS ORDER IMPORTS AT RANDOM AND PUSH CARGOES INTO MOZAMBIQUE PORTS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO SYSTEM'S TOLERANCES AND WITHOUT GIVING SUFFICIENT PRIOR NOTICE. COMMITTEES ATTEMPT TO REGULATE PORT OPERATIONS BASED ON INFORMATION FROM PORTS OF DEPARTURE INBOUND TO MOZAMBIQUE BUT FREQUENTLY LARGE SHIPMENTS OF AUTOS AND BULK PRODUCTS ARRIVE WITH LITTLE NOTICE PREVENTING PROMPT

ACCOMMODATION IN SYSTEM. ONE REPORTED OBJECTIVE OF RECENT ZAMBIAN DELEGATION VISIT TO MOZAMBIQUE WAS TO PERSUADE MOZAMBIQUE AUTHORITIES TO IMPROVE PORT FORWARD PLANNING. MOZAMBIQUE AUTHORITIES (MOSTLY PORTUGUESE) DECLINED TAKE ANY INITIATIVES PENDING "DEVELOPMENTS" -- PRESUMABLY FORTHCOMING INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER-MATH.

4. NACALA PORT COMMITTEE CONSISTENTLY HAS RECOMMENDED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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URGENT EXPANSION OF FACILITIES TO EASE BEIRA CONGESTION BUT ALSO TO ACCOMMODATE EXPANDED TRAFFIC WITHIN NEXT FEW YEARS FOR ZAMBIA AS WELL AS FOR MAJOR VIPHYA PULP/PAPER PROJECT UNDER DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI. FOR SAME POLITICAL REASONS IMPLIED PARA 3, ABOVE, LITTLE SERIOUS PLANNING APPEARS TO BE TAKING PLACE.

5. ONE PRIVATE EXPORTER HERE SUGGESTS BACKLOG MAY BE DIMINISHED BY LOW LEVELS OF ZAMBIAN FOREIGN EXCHANGE WHICH MAY

REDUCE ORDERS AND LOWER IMPORT LEVELS. SOURCE CLAIMS SITUATION IS ESPECIALLY BAD AT DAR ES SALAAM WHERE ZAMBIA WAS POSTPONING TAKING POSSESSION OF GOODS BECAUSE OF FOREIGN CURRENCY STRAINS. EMBASSY LUSAKA MAY WISH TO COMMENT ON THIS POINT.

6. RE COMMENT PARA 6 REFTEL, MALAWI ALREADY PLACES HIGHEST PRIORITY ON TRANSPORTATION SERVICE TO MALAWI SUBJECT TO LIMITATIONS OF OVERALL SYSTEM. NEW MALAWI ROAD AND RAIL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS LINKING TWO COUNTRIES CERTAINLY UNDERLINES THIS PRIORITY. AT SAME TIME MALAWI HAS ITS OWN IMPORT AND EXPORT REQUIREMENTS WHICH MUST BE MET BY SAME RAIL/PORT SYSTEM. NO MENTION WAS MADE OF MALAWI'S REQUIREMENTS IN DISCUSSION REPORTED REFTEL BUT AS EXAMPLE IN FEBRUARY 1975, 40,300 TONS OF MALWI GOODS TRANSITED NACALA ALONE. 30,700 ADDITIONAL TONS TRANSITED NACALA FOR OTHER DESTINATIONS -- MOST, WE WOULD JUDGE, FOR ZAMBIA.
STEVENSON

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